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Mujahedin Operations in Bosnia

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Mujahedin units, possibly supported by Iranian SOF, have once again intensified their activities in central Bosnia as the weather has become conducive to offensive combat operations. Their increasing influence on both the Muslim government in Sarajevo and the three army corps located to the west of the city has alienated much of the local populace and developed into another source of irritation for the UN peacekeeping forces in this war-ravaged country. Detachments of Mujahedin have assisted in training selected Bosnian army elements for the past two years, but last summer they also began to spearhead many of the tactical-level attacks against Bosnian Serb forces. The potential for this organization to escalate its activities remains high and thus further threatens regional stability in the republic's hinterland.

Funding for the Mujahedin has been provided by Iran and various other Islamic states with an interest in expanding extremism into the European theater. International radical groups, such as Hizbollah, have also been included on the suspected list of sponsors. Bosnian government sources have grudgingly admitted the presence of the Mujahedin but publicly intimate that they have accepted their presence as a "necessary evil" to maintain the flow of aid from international Islamic contributors. This "aid" has been distributed in forms ranging from hard currency to clandestine arms shipments.

Although the numbers of Mujahedin currently operating in Bosnia remain a matter of speculation, most credible estimates indicate approximately 4000 members. However, professional "holy warriors" constitute only a minority among them. Many of the others are indigenous Bosnian Muslims who demonstrate appropriate religious zeal and allegiance to the organization. In the near term, the Mujahedin will continue to focus on local military operations and establishing their influence with the Bosnian Muslim government. As time progresses, they will likely surpass these original objectives and divert their attention to politicizing the Muslim population and attempting to establish an Islamic republic obedient to fundamentalist doctrine.